

NDC BRIEFING

15 October 1951

MIDDLE EAST

- I. In Lebanon formation of four-man stop-gap cabinet has brought end to strikes and violence, at least for time being. Move seems likely to be accepted with relief by rank-and-file of all factions.

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A. Harame, [REDACTED]

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was named as prime minister. Christian militant leader Gemayel represents pro-Chamoun "loyalists." Two relative moderates from Muslim and Christian sides (Wazani and Edde) have taken remaining posts.

1. Houleus hold, in addition to prime ministership, ministries of foreign affairs, defense, and finance.
2. Only potentially important portfolio held by Christian is interior ministry.

B. There may well be new difficulties when attempt is made to fill out cabinet with representatives of other religious communities which is "must" in Lebanese politics.

- II. In Jordan beginning of British troop evacuation raises question of what may follow.

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State Department review completed

C. Monarchy may be kept afloat for time being by UAR's fear that Israelis would take military action in event Husayn overthrown suddenly.

1. Presence of UN representative in Amman may also be deterrent factor.

III. In Iraq, regime, though asserting its independence of Nasir, is following in Nasir's footsteps by establishing economic and military arrangements with USSR.

A. Past weekend Iraq concluded agreement re-establishing trade relations with USSR. These were cut off in 1955. Agreement also provides for a Soviet trade mission in Baghdad.

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C. Prime Minister Qasim's struggle with his former deputy, Arif, seems ended for present since Arif has finally left for his post as ambassador to West Germany.

B. Regime will need all its talent to meet problems facing it, one for example, is separatist sentiments of 800,000 Kurds.

1. US embassy in Baghdad believes Kurds will seek independence or autonomy within a year. It guesses that as of now 64 percent would follow revolt led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani, Kurdish leader who recently returned from 12 years of exile in the Soviet Union.

2. The regime's propaganda is seeking to placate the Kurds but positive achievements in rural agriculture and education are needed and Qasim has nothing to show along these lines yet.
3. Kurdish issue only one of many which regime has not yet shown itself capable of handling, and further political tremors in Iraq seem likely.
- IV. In Tunisia the sharp attack on Nasser's role in Arab League has since lead to a break in diplomatic relations by Tunisia and may perhaps result in an effort by Nasser to oust Bourguiba.
 - A. Outburst was reflection of Bourguiba's antagonism toward Nasser, especially for harboring and supporting Bourguiba's exiled political rival, Salah ben Youssef. This antagonism has been described by some Tunisians as obsession.
 1. Last March Bourguiba claimed possession of evidence that Cairo had underwritten a ben Youssef plot to assassinate him.
 2. Late last month Bourguiba recalled his ambassador from Cairo as mark of his displeasure over ben Youssef's continued presence there.
 - B. Moroccan and Iraqi delegates at Arab League Council session quickly dissociated their governments from Tunisian statement. On 12 October the council unanimously denounced Tunisian speech. This appears to leave Tunisia isolated from its Arab neighbors at least for present.

1. Tunisia has dispatched a mission to Rabat to seek Moroccan cooperation.
- C. Cairo radio has launched continuing attack against Bourguiba, branding his choice of "imperialists" to check Benir and drawing comparison with Nuri Said.
- D. Bourguiba's action is certain to be exploited by hostile elements at home.
 1. President's ability to act independently of the wishes of the Algerian "provisional government" is hence more narrowly circumscribed.

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